HIGHLIGHTS

- Hostilities have significantly escalated in and around the frontline town of Avdiivka over the past few weeks, prompting local authorities to call on the approximately 2,000 civilians who remain there to urgently evacuate the area.

- Those who remain live under harsh conditions, with continual shelling destroying houses, hospitals and schools. The town has inadequate access to water, no supply of electricity or gas, health assistance has been decimated, and markets have been disrupted.

- Access to Avdiivka for humanitarian workers and even volunteers has become extremely challenging due to the extremely insecure situation.

- Despite increasing challenges, humanitarians are delivering vital aid to ensure civilians in Avdiivka can meet their basic needs.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Over the past few weeks, hostilities have significantly escalated in and around Avdiivka, a town on the front line in Donetsk Oblast under Government control. Due to the increased insecurity, local authorities are calling on the remaining 2,000 civilians to urgently evacuate the area. On 20 March, Ukrainian authorities reported that the town was being hit by 250-300 artillery shells and 20 aerial bombardments each day, leaving civilians dead and injured, damaging homes, hospitals and schools, and disrupting essential services.

People in the town have inadequate access to water, and the supply of gas and electricity has been disrupted due to damage to these systems. The war has also decimated health assistance and disrupted markets; and people are almost entirely reliant on humanitarian assistance to survive.

The latest developments come on top of the previous eight years of conflict, which had already taken a heavy toll on civilians in Avdiivka, which is located 20 kilometres from the Russian-controlled city of Donetsk. While damage to housing, the energy sector, civilian infrastructure and production facilities has been recorded on a regular basis since 2014, the situation dramatically worsened over the past months, and most of the 32,000 civilians who used to live there, have already fled, including some 200 people who were evacuated in the past 3 weeks alone.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Access to Avdiivka for humanitarian workers and even volunteers has become extremely challenging due to the volatile security situation. Most assistance destined for Avdiivka is delivered to Kostiantynivka or other nearby locations, from where community-based volunteers organize the distributions.

Humanitarian organizations sent, for example, an inter-agency humanitarian convoy on 20 February to Zhelanne, some 60 kilometres from Avdiivka, with aid supplies meant for the people of the Avdiivska hromada, among other front-line communities. The convoy delivered food, emergency shelter kits, tarpaulin and plastic sheets, hygiene items, thermal...
blankets, winter clothing, bedding sets, solar lamps and other essential household items. The supplies were provided by INTERSOS, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

In addition, IOM also distributed close to 90 hygiene kits and coal to 280 families in the area between January and March; and WFP, together with their NGO partner Team4UA, delivered a one-month supply of food for 2,500 people. Earlier in December 2022, UNICEF delivered food, hygiene kits, household cleaning supplies, wool blankets, towels and other essential household items to Avdiivka residents who temporarily relocated to the village of Sokol in Ocheretynska hromada. And since February 2022, UNHCR and its partners have reached nearly 10,000 people in the Pokrovskyi raion (including Avdiivska hromada) with protection services, including legal consultations, as well as essential items such as heaters, thermal blankets, kitchen sets, hygiene kits and emergency shelter materials for house repairs.

The national NGO Proliska had been operational in Avdiivka until last summer when their premises were damaged together with other buildings in town. Since then, Proliska has been supporting the people of the hromada from Chasiv Yar and Dnipro, mostly relying on local volunteers to do the last-mile delivery. With the support from Ukrainian Humanitarian Fund (UHF), they bring food, water and hygiene supplies, and through UNHCR, they deliver shelter materials and other vital household items to support the people who remain in Avdiivka itself and surrounding areas.

For more information, please contact OCHA Ukraine: Saviano Abreu, deabreuisidoro@un.org

For more information, visit:
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